

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/APPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members

From: Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Re: Commission Meeting February 7, 2012

Meeting was called to order at 5:32p.m.

Attendance:

Present: Lou Criscuolo, Marc Fasano, Donna Malley, Christine Orris, Krista Polinsky.

Absent: Paul Kottage, Jim Marshall.

Staff: Michael J. Freda, First Selectman

Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Carla Riccio, Secretary

Election of Officers:

First Selectman Michael Freda was present to address three orders of business: entertaining nominations for Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary for the Community Services Commission. Lou Criscuolo made a motion to nominate Donna Malley as Chairman, seconded by Christine Orris. Krista Polinsky made a motion to nominate Marc Fasano as Vice Chairman, seconded by Donna Malley. Christine Orris made a motion to nominate Krista Polinsky as Secretary, seconded by Marc Fasano. All were in favor of each nomination.

1. Acceptance of Minutes of meeting held on December 6, 2011:

Lou Criscuolo made a motion to accept the Minutes of December 6, 2011, seconded by Christine Orris.

2. Correspondence:

An open letter was received by Mr. Swinkoski on behalf of the Community Services Commission and Department of Community Services (in addition to the Board of Selectmen, Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools, Police Commission and the Chief of Police) from Col. Raymond Fowler regarding the Town's involvement in Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention.

Mr. Fowler returned to the February 7, 2012 meeting after initially appearing at the June 7, 2011 meeting to revisit this topic with the Commission, as well as facilitate receipt of copies of this open letter to all commissioners.

See Public Participation.

3. Old Business:

Certificate of Recognition: At the December 6, 2011 meeting, the Commission suggested that a certificate of recognition be sent on behalf of the Commission to North Haven High School's Interact Club in successfully raising \$4,500 in donations for toys for 300 children through DCF's Foster and Adoptive Services New Haven office.

Ms. Riccio created a draft of a certificate template for the Commission's review. Krista Polinsky made a motion to approve the draft of the certificate of recognition, seconded by Christine Orris. All were in favor.

Ms. Riccio will obtain parchment paper and customize the certificate on the Commission's behalf. The Commission further discussed that as anyone sees a group or individual whom they think should be recognized for a notable deed done for the community, they should receive a certificate and have it presented to them at a future Community Services Commission meeting. It was decided that as they identify groups, they will forward the information to Ms. Riccio, to which she will forward the recommendation to the commission for discussion and vote via email.

Courageous Parenting Workshop: At the December 6, 2011 meeting, Donna Malley indicated that she would contact Superintendent Cronin to bring the idea of offering Courageous Parenting as a mandatory requirement for North Haven High School students who are involved extracurricular activities. Mrs. Malley reported that she spoke with Superintendent Cronin and he would be glad to meet to discuss this idea once budget discussions have concluded.

Child Abuse Awareness Week: Mr. Freda informed the commissioners that the Town fully endorses and embraces creating a greater level of awareness on child abuse. While an oversight mechanism already exists in the counseling services within the Community Services Department under Harbor Health Services, he looks to having this awareness heightened.

Mr. Freda reported that he has already reached out to Harbor Health and learned that they have a Child Abuse Prevention Specialist in their Ansonia office who can provide training in awareness, education and prevention, in addition to anything else that the Town needs to be able to inculcate greater awareness of child abuse into the Town through the counseling services.

In speaking with Harbor Health, Mr. Freda summarized the idea that in addition to having that level of expertise through the counseling services, they would introduce a 1-800 hotline phone number to report abuse. Mr. Freda felt that the Town could act as a portal to offer services at the Town level, and utilize State services (like DCF support) at a state level, when necessary.

Mr. Freda and Mr. Swinkoski will be meeting with Harbor Health within the next couple of weeks to map out exactly what they can do to train the counselors in the Department of Community Services and to implement the 800 number as a starting platform of action. The next intended step would be for Mr. Freda to approach the Superintendent of Schools in order to broaden the initiative through the North Haven school system.

Mr. Fowler echoes Mr. Freda's comments during *Public Participation*.

Mr. Freda encouraged the commission to think about what role they could play in helping the Town with this initiative. Mr. Fasano suggested that the commission's role be in providing outreach efforts and to make sure an umbrella is set in place as to not allow incidents to fall through the cracks. His ideas ranged from raising public awareness through a candlelight vigil, to working in conjunction with Community Services and Recreation to make sure that all coaches in Town have training and the appropriate background checks. In light of Mr. Fasano's background in Law Enforcement, Mr. Freda

suggested that Mr. Fasano attend the meeting with Harbor Health, and also invited Col. Fowler in order to make sure that everyone is on the same page.

Outreach Fund: At the December 6, 2011 meeting, Ms. Polinsky requested that a discussion regarding the use of the Outreach Funds. Ms. Riccio provided the Commission with a draft of the procedure and guidelines for the Commission's review. The commission reviewed the document, and upon the suggestion of Mr. Criscuolo, a guideline to request proof of residency (i.e. a tax bill) was added, as well as to set the award limit to \$1,500. Ms. Riccio provided some background information on the application procedure and those organizations who have sought use of these Outreach funds in the past.

Christine Orris made a motion to accept the Outreach Fund Proposed Procedure and Guidelines, as revised, seconded by Lou Criscuolo. All were in favor. Mr. Swinkoski will continue to approve these requests as they come in.

During the Finance Report at the December 6, 2011 meeting, Mr. Swinkoski indicated that two accounts exist within the Outreach Fund. It was reported at that time that (\$14,563 exists in one account and \$26,789 in the other). Mrs. Malley asked Mr. Swinkoski for clarification on these two accounts. Mr. Swinkoski explained that one was a Community Outreach account (\$14,563) and the second fund was the Project Graduation account (\$26,789).

4. New Business:

Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

a. Director's Report

Community Services

Energy Assistance: Mr. Swinkoski reported that since the start of energy assistance season (10/19/11), 241 applications have been taken. Of these 241 applications, 184 clients processed and 57 are still awaiting approval. Additionally, he noted that the energy season has been extended until May 1, 2012.

December 2011 / January 2012 Monetary Donations (Food Bank): Mr. Swinkoski noted the following donations:

\$2150 – St. John's Church – Annual Golf Outing
\$2000 - Buffalo Wild Wings (Pre-grand opening event; proceeds raised)
\$100 - Green Acres School
\$181 – Fenn Buehler
\$50 - Ann Ruocco
\$160 - Suzanne Giddings
\$25 - George & Gloria Schofield
\$100 – Suk Kuen Chan

Food donations (Food bank): 9 donations of food bags were received.

Monetary Donations (Fuel Bank): Montowese Baptist Church donated \$251.70.

Toy Donations: 63 donor families and/or donor organizations provided toys this 2011 Holiday season.

Food bank: Mr. Swinkoski reported that in December 2011, 135 meals were distributed; in January 2012, 306 meals were distributed.

Christmas Food Distribution: This event took place on December 21 and 22, 2011. Ms. Riccio reported that 50 families participated this year, compared to 46 households in 2010.

Toy Selection: Ms. Riccio provided a summary of this past holiday's selection program. Ms. Riccio happily reported that 32 families scheduled private appointments to select toys this year. She commented that the format of selection by appointment went very well and was very organized. She received a lot of great feedback from the families who participated. The increased age range (18 years and under) was also well received.

Ms. Riccio reported only one incident, in which she witnessed an attempted theft in progress in toy room by one recipient family. A police report was filed and this family has been banned from the toy selection for future distributions. The incident could have been avoided if the room was locked, and therefore moving forward, the toy distribution room will remain locked at all times when not in use during the week of the holiday toy distribution.

Daycare:

Mr. Swinkoski reported the current enrollment in both Daycare Programs. Preschool currently have 15 children (all slots are filled). All School Age slots are filled with a capacity of 30 children.

Senior Center:

Bingo Machine: Mr. Swinkoski noted that the center is in the process of purchasing a new bingo machine which will have a flashboard.

Medical Transportation: Mr. Swinkoski noted that the need of the two added days of Medical Transportation continues to demonstrate that there was a need to increase the service. Whereas it was thought the expansion of the service would relieve the three day driver this is not so. Both schedules are full and seniors are pleased with having a five day service providing transportation to their medical appointments.

b. Finance Report

Mr. Swinkoski reviewed the current snapshot of the Emergency Fund (*Fund 204*). Activity for January 2012 reflects the following:

Food: Currently \$9,903 in fund.

Fuel: Currently \$10,288 in fund.

Miscellaneous: Currently \$36,541 in fund.

Mr. Swinkoski distributed budget reports (ending November 30, 2011) to the Commission for their review. The Senior Center is slightly over budget, however Community Services and Welfare are on schedule.

5. Public Comment:

Col. Ray Fowler was in attendance, making a return from the June 6, 2011 meeting, in which he wished to revisit the topic of Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention as National Child Abuse Awareness Month is approaches (April). He provided a high level overview of what was presented at the previous week's Board of Selectmen meeting. He reviewed the three types of child abuse as well as the six types of perpetrators of child abuse. He also highlighted some facts of recent national incidents of child abuse.

Col. Fowler stated that while Harbor Health takes on the initiative on the professional side, he would like to see the commission take the role of promoting the program and educating people in the community. He also sees the Board of Education as a critical piece in this program being successful.

Ms. Riccio will forward scanned copies of Col. Fowler's open letter to all commissioners for their review.

The commission felt that in order to address the Child Abuse Awareness efforts for April 2012, the Tuesday, April 3, 2012 regular meeting of the Community Services Commission should be rescheduled to Tuesday, March 6, 2012. Mr. Swinkoski will look into the feasibility of that date and let the Commission know if this will be possible.

6. Adjournment:

Marc Fasano asked for a Motion to Adjourn, seconded by Christine Orris. The meeting was adjourned at 6:26p.m.